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JP(61)82(Final)

14th July, 1961

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CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

JOINT PLANNING STAFF

BERLIN CONTINGENCY PLANNING
BRIEF ON PLANS TO RESTORE ACCESS TO BERLIN

Report by the Joint Planning Staff

In accordance with the instructions of the Chief of the Defence Staff, we have prepared a brief setting out the United Kingdom views on the various LIVEOAK plans. The paper includes at Appendix 'A' a summary of the LIVEOAK plans, and at Appendix 'B' suggested answers to some questions which might be posed by the Americans.

2. In preparing the brief, which is at Annex, we have consulted the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Joint Intelligence Staff.

Recommendation

3. We recommend that, if they approve our brief, the Chiefs of Staff should authorize its use by their representative during any discussions on Berlin contingency planning with United States authorities.

(Signed) D.L. POWELL-JONES
E.B. ASHMORE
E.V.M. STRICKLAND
D.C. STAFLETON.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, S.W.1.

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Annex to JP(61)82(Final)

BERLIN CONTINGENCY PLANNING
BRIEF ON PLANS TO RESTORE ACCESS TO BERLIN

AIR OF OPERATIONS

1. LIVEOAK recognizes* that no military action could by itself re-open access to Berlin if the Russians were determined to resist. The aim of all operations after the initial probe is, therefore, to provide circumstances in which negotiations might prove fruitful and to compel the Russians to face the unmistakable imminence of general war.

PLANS FOR GROUND ACCESS OPERATIONS

The Initial Probe (FREESTYLE)

2. This is a tripartite military probe⁺ solely to determine whether the Russians would use or permit the use of force to prevent passage. The plan covers three alternative courses of action, to be decided at the time, ranging from a small unarmed convoy to one supported by troops of about company strength and armoured cars. Fire would only be opened in self defence and the force would attempt to withdraw if opposed or obstructed.

UK View

We support this operation⁺.

Battalion Group Operation (TRADE WIND)

3. This is a tripartite operation which would be mounted only after the initial probe had shown Russian/GDR intention to obstruct access by force, and would be backed by the threat of nuclear operations.

UK View

We do not believe⁺ that tripartite land operations on a battalion or higher level would either convince the Russians of our determination or achieve the object of maintaining access to Berlin.

4. We commented⁺ to General Norstad that this operation should only be undertaken when NATO was fully prepared for global war. In December, 1959, United Kingdom approval⁺ was given for C-in-C BAOR to make detailed plans without commitment. Subsequently, War Office examination⁺ of CINCBAOR's plan showed that TRADE WIND could not be regarded as a sound military operation, mainly because of the ease with which it could be blocked fore and aft by demolition and thus placed in an ignominious position from which extrication would be difficult (there are forty-eight bridges between the frontier and Berlin). We accepted this view and informed the Minister of Defence that the operation could only result in a military disaster, but decided that it

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Annex (Continued)

would be undesirable so to inform General Norstad officially. Subsequently, however, the Chief of the Defence Staff did express some doubts to him. We have now signified agreement that training should be carried out and CINCPACOR has suggested to General Norstad that it should take place at Sennelager in late September or October this year.

Division Size Operation

5. When considering an operation on divisional scale, the original LIVEOAK Study³ concluded that, since it would be militarily ludicrous to confine such a force to the autobahn, violation of territory covered by the Warsaw Pact would be involved; further, the removal of a force of this size from NATO would also have serious effects on the shield; finally, the logistic difficulties would be sufficient to eliminate this idea from further consideration. Notwithstanding these conclusions, General Norstad, in August 1960, requested permission to plan for the use of a force of divisional size. We considered that a divisional operation would be even more unsound than a battalion one and asked that LIVEOAK should first undertake a feasibility study. This study, on which General Norstad has based his instructions to CINCPACOR to plan for the use of a division-size force, visualized the following possible missions:-

- (a) To provide additional evidence of our determination to maintain ground access to Berlin, by its presence West of Helmsdorf, before and during the TRADE WIND operation.
- (b) After TRADE WIND has achieved its first objective, by providing circumstances in which negotiations might prove fruitful, to take physical control of vulnerable points on the ground access route and to escort surface traffic. While negotiations are in progress, to support and maintain the TRADE WIND force in position and to provide cover for its disengagement.

General Norstad has suggested that nuclear weapons may need to be provided in support but has left the detailed composition of this force to CINCPACOR.

UK View

The merit of this particular concept is that, without violating GDR territory (i.e. by "picketing the route"), it could provide the TRADE WIND force with the backing it would need to prevent the autobahn being cut without Russian/GDR resort to force. It is claimed that it would provide evidence of a firm decision to maintain access by ground as well as by air, and that it would also help to maintain the Western military position while any negotiations were in progress. We believe that it would not appear convincing unless accompanied by Western mobilization and readiness for war, which in fact it would

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3 COS. 1242/22/9/60
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3 Appendix to COS. 182/10/2/61

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Annex (Continued)

significantly impair; further, such operations could be contained in circumstances which would either force the West to fire first or bring them to an ignominious halt, and would not necessarily re-open access or contribute anything to the viability of Berlin.

AIR ACCESS PLANS

6. Tripartite plans (JACK PINE) provide for air transport operations to cover a civil airlift, a garrison airlift, a combination of the foregoing, the evacuation of allied non-combatants and selected aliens, and air tactical operations. There is also a quadripartite plan (GBAL) for the supply by air of Berlin.

UK View

We have agreed to these plans, the United Kingdom contribution for which is within our capability.

Feasibility of Plans

7. Air/ground communications and navigation aids for these operations are vulnerable to Electronic Counter Measures (ECM), especially so in the circumstances of an airlift, when they could be attacked both from the ground and from the air at very short range. Only in the case of VHF ground/air communications is there a specific counter-countermeasure, in the form of high-power transmitters which could be used for broadcast control. There are, however, large numbers of aids and communications channels and the aircraft fit varies between types. The denial of all aids and communications channels would require a major and sustained Russian ECM effort. The West Germans consider that alternative routings will provide adequate point-to-point communications.

8. Serious and sustained electronic countermeasures could reduce our rate of effort considerably during bad weather and at night. On this account, airlift force requirements have been geared to operations in visual or marginal weather conditions (averaging 20 days out of 30) to guarantee the success of the airlift in the face of Russian jamming.

EFFECT ON THE RUSSIANS

9. A factor which would weight heavily with the Soviet Government would be their assessment of the staunchness of Western public opinion in support of their governments' policy. If the operations were not preceded by a general mobilization of NATO they would probably decide that the West was bluffing and was not prepared to accept the ultimate risk of global war. In this case they would exploit the West's action accordingly. They would manoeuvre us, so far as ground operations are concerned, into the position of having to be the first to shoot if we wished to proceed, and could then oppose the operation by such conventional military force as was necessary, which would not be much, meanwhile denouncing us as aggressor.

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Annex (Concluded)

10. The LIVEOAK plans are such that it would be difficult to convince the Russians of our determination and we could not hope to do so unless the operation was seen to be preceded by full scale (and popularly accepted) preparations for war - mobilization, with all the disruption to national economics involved. The danger of miscalculation would then be at its greatest.

SUGGESTED LINE TO BE TAKEN

11. The merit of air operations, as opposed to ground operations, is that, if successful, they contribute directly to the material support of Berlin and cannot be stopped by any means short of overt aggressive action. Any such attack would lend support to the Western position and could be used to justify whatever subsequent measures might be decided upon. We therefore maintain our view that once the initial land probe (FREESTYLE) has been tried, airlift operations provide the best hope of re-opening access to Berlin.

12. However, we believe that NATO readiness for war ought to precede all action other than an airlift, after FREESTYLE. If we went so far, the risks of war would be grave indeed. If we are not prepared to face these risks, the LIVEOAK ground access plans subsequent to FREESTYLE are militarily unjustifiable. If we are prepared for these risks, this is not the best way to face them.

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Appendix 'A' to Annex to
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BERLIN CONTINGENCY PLANNING

SUMMARY OF PLANS TO RE-STORE ACCESS
TO BERLIN

GROUND ACCESS PLANS

The Initial Probe (Operation FREESTYLE)

1. This is a tripartite military operation⁺ in the form of a probe along the autobahn to determine whether the Russians would use or permit the use of force to prevent Allied access to Berlin. The force would be organized on a tripartite basis and would be capable of three courses of action, to be selected in the light of circumstances at the time. CINCPACOR is the field commander designate and responsible for the detailed planning.

Course A. An unarmed test convoy of four vehicles which would attempt passage. If obstructed, the convoy would withdraw.

Course B. An unarmed test convoy of three vehicles supported by armed troops. If obstructed, the convoy would after due warning, attempt to remove the obstruction. If forcibly obstructed, it would withdraw. Fire would only be opened in self defence.

Course C. An unarmed test convoy of three vehicles supported by armed troops of about company strength, armoured cars and engine or equipment to surmount obstacles. If obstructed, the convoy would, after due warning, attempt to surmount any obstacle within its capability. If forcibly obstructed, the convoy would withdraw under such fire from the armoured cars as might be necessary to disengage.

Battalion Group Operation (Operation TRADE WIND)

2. LIVEOAK considers that a tripartite battalion group operation along the autobahn would represent a serious military effort to re-open access in that it would be capable of maintaining contact with enemy forces which blocked its path or attacked it, and could not easily be engulfed. CINCPACOR is the field commander designate and responsible for detailed planning.

3. The battalion group, organized on a tripartite basis and including tanks, armoured cars, artillery and engineer support, would proceed from Helmstedt to Berlin along the autobahn, surmounting en route as many obstacles as its resources permitted. The actual method of operation would depend on factors which can only be determined at the time. However, the following guidance

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Appendix 'A' (Continued)

is laid down for training and preparation:-

- (a) The force would be prepared to fight Russian/GDR forces if necessary.
- (b) The force would not open fire until fired on.
- (c) Russian/GDR use of firepower to close the autobahn would be met by maximum aggressive action within the resources of the force.

4. The Battalion Group would be assisted by air reconnaissance and, should it be attacked, Allied aircraft would also provide the necessary close air support to permit its disengagement.

Division Size Operation

5. General Norstad, although not prepared to give precise instructions, envisages the following possible missions for a tripartite division-size force:-

- (a) Prior to and during the TRADE WIND operation, provide additional evidence, by its presence in the area West of Helmstedt, of our determination to maintain ground access to Berlin.
- (b) After TRADE WIND has achieved its first objective, i.e. has provided circumstances in which negotiations might prove fruitful:-
 - (i) Take physical control of vulnerable points on the ground access route and escort surface traffic.
 - (ii) Support and maintain the TRADE WIND force in position while negotiations are in progress.
 - (iii) Provide cover for the disengagement of the TRADE WIND force.

6. In his instructions to CINCEAOR who is responsible for detailed planning, General Norstad also included the following guidance on the composition and organization of the force:-

- (a) It should be of approximately division size, e.g. 10,000 to 12,000.
- (b) It should be capable of a variety of missions.
- (c) Planning consideration should include the use of tactical nuclear weapons in support, though General Norstad would retain direct control of their use.
- (d) The personnel to be provided by the three countries should be approximately equal in number.
- (e) Apart from air reconnaissance, combat air support should be restricted to supporting disengagement, although it should be readily available.

Ø Appendix to COS.182/10/2/61

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Appendix 'A' (Continued)

- (f) Consideration should be given to including a light airlift capability in addition to liaison aircraft.
- (g) The TRADE WIND Battalion may be included as part of the division.

AIR ACCESS PLANS

7. Tripartite air access plans, grouped under the code name "JACK PINE", provide for air transport operations to cover a garrison airlift, a civil airlift, a combination of the foregoing, the evacuation of Allied non-combatants and selected aliens and air tactical operations designed to maintain air access through the corridors to Berlin. There is also a quadripartite plan for the supply by air of Berlin. Operational control would be centralized under CINCUSAFE.

Air Transport Operations

8. Garrison Airlift (DARK BOTTLE). Provides for the logistic support of the Berlin garrisons by air should military surface traffic be interrupted. Each nation would be responsible for its own element. The UK daily commitment would be 5 MRT sorties, allowing for operations taking place only in visual or marginal weather conditions.

9. Civil Airlift (BROKEN BOTTLE). Provides for the substitution of civil by military aircraft to maintain air services to Berlin should scheduled commercial flights cease. The task would be shared equally between the Three Powers, the UK daily commitment being 9 MRT sorties.

10. Garrison/Civil Airlift (DOUBLE BOTTLE). A combination of these two airlifts, for which the UK daily commitment would be 12 MRT sorties.

11. Air Evacuation of Non-Combatants (TRIPLE PLAY). Provides for the air evacuation of Allied non-combatants and selected aliens from Berlin. The Three Powers have agreed to carry out the operation simultaneously, but with the reserved right to take unilateral action, subject to prior notice. The UK commitment would be a total of 53 Britannia sorties, which could be reduced by the backlift of aircraft engaged in other JACK PINE operations if these were in progress.

12. Quadripartite Berlin Airlift - QBAL(TUMBLE). Provides for the air supply of Berlin, with the Tripartite powers providing the airlift and West Germany providing the cargo, airfield facilities and logistic/administrative support. The UK contribution would be met by 12 MRT aircraft (plus 7 in reserve) from Transport Command and 39 aircraft from civil charter.

13. Air Tactical Operations (SHARP LANCE). These are tripartite operations by tactical aircraft, following interference with transport aircraft, to make unmistakably clear that the Three Powers are determined to maintain their right of air access within the corridors to Berlin and compel the Russians to face the imminence of war should they persist in obstructing access.

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Appendix 'A' (Concluded)

Under this concept, transport aircraft would fly in the corridors in accordance with existing procedures and fighter aircraft would provide either direct support, escort or cover within corridors, or indirect support by patrols at the Western ends of the corridors. The UK could meet its tactical air commitments during 1964 by the fighter squadrons in Germany reinforced by one Javelin squadron from Fighter Command. After the withdrawal of the fighter squadrons from Germany, planned for end-1964, Fighter Command would have to provide all the aircraft for the British contribution; this may become progressively more difficult.

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SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WHICH
MIGHT BE RAISED BY THE AMERICANS

Q.1.

You seem to assume that the TRADE WIND force will be obstructed or cut off. Is it not possible that this demonstration of determined action will be allowed free passage?

A.1.

We accept that the Russians or GDR might let an armed or escorted force pass. However, such passage would achieve nothing permanent, would prove nothing conclusive about the Russian intentions and merely gets the force at the wrong end of the autobahn. If the Russians or GDR understood, as is probable, that this was a battalion force and not a supply convoy they might well allow it to pass, but this would not help to get supply convoys through.

Q.2.

Could not a TRADE WIND force deal with any obstruction without fighting?

A.2.

The ability to deal with obstacles will depend upon the scale of engineer effort in the force. (It may be argued that the Russians/GDR are unlikely to destroy autobahn bridges and thereby permanently obstruct civilian traffic and alienate world opinion). However, even if they can deal with obstructions without fighting, this will not by itself guarantee autobahn access to subsequent supply convoys.

Q.3.

If you don't think the TRADE WIND force is adequate, what size of force do you suggest? (or - Don't you think one or two divisions in support of TRADE WIND would achieve the object?)

A.3.

Whatever the size of force, and the larger the more likely it would be to provoke hostilities, it could not guarantee access if the enemy did not wish it to.

Q.4.

Don't you see the need for some intermediate operation between the initial probe and the threat of all-out war?

A.4.

In our view the ultimate threat of all-out war must be clearly evident from the time the initial probe has failed. We see any intermediate ground operation resulting either in military defeat for the force involved or manifest failure to achieve any lasting advantage with obvious propaganda gain to the Russians and diminution of the credibility of the ultimate threat.

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Appendix 'B' (Concluded)

Q.5.

What if an airlift starts in November or December when the weather factor does not allow contact flying for 20 days out of 30?

A.5.

I agree that if a QBAL airlift starts in late autumn there might be a shortfall for the first month or two. The stocks in Berlin are such that a slow start should be acceptable provided the required average rate of supply over a period of six months is achieved. This should allow time to bring United Nations and world opinion to bear in persuading the Russians to abandon their obstruction.

Q.6.

What if the Russians obstruct an airlift by means other than ECM, e.g. by balloons, by air activity in the landing approaches or corridors, or by smoke generation around the Berlin airfields?

A.6.

Most possible forms of air obstruction have already been considered by the appropriate experts, who have suggested action to overcome them. In general, we must be prepared to lose aircraft by an overtly aggressive action which would be tantamount to shooting down.

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